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Katelyn Kiner

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Katelyn Kiner
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Abstract
Léopold Sédar Senghor grew up in a relatively calm colonial Africa, came of age in the excitement of World War Two, and, as a man, helped create a sovereign Senegal. This research looks at forces of influence from his boyhood onward to see how they shaped both his poetry and politics. The time Senghor spent learning and working in France is particularly highlighted, as it was a time of immense cultural growth for Senghor. The most influential parts of his time in France came from his involvement in and creation of the Négritude movement. This literary and ideological movement inspired the writing of his poetry and led to his more moderate socialism once he was involved in politics. This research also takes a closer looks at how in his poetry, Senghor wrestled with reconciling African history to French culture and how that effected his foreign policy. In the end, the study of his poems and politics exposes Senghor as a man from opposing cultures trying to find harmony between them.

France
Senghor traveled to France to continue his studies at the University of Paris - Sorbonne. His years in France proved instructive not only academically, but also in his sense of identity.

Négritude
While in Paris Senghor met other young black intellectuals from the French colonies. Among these other students, he began to think deeply about how he fit into French society apart from the label of the so called ‘assimilé’. Out of this collective introspection began a literary ideological movement called Négritude. Négritude deals with the creation of a common Franco-black identity and the rejection of colonial racism. Senghor’s poetry is some of the most famous of the movement.

Sénegal
This was the land that Senghor dedicated his life to liberate from French colonialism, while remaining their political friends. In return it provided life long inspiration for his poetry.

Childhood
He spent his first seven years roaming the fields near his rural town and developing a great fondness for his country that he would later describe in his poetry. For his primary education, Senghor attended Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil, a Catholic mission school. Here he grew in his Catholic faith and was introduced to western teaching. Senghor later reflected that at Ngasobil he gained many skills that aided in his political success.

Political Career
After his years in France, Senghor came back to Senegal to serve on a French commission as an envoy of Senegal. From this early experience he gained renown for his eloquence, intelligence, and poise in challenging situations. Over the next 35 years Senghor held various elected positions including a Deputy in the French National Assembly and the first President of Senegal after its independence. From these two positions he worked to maintain a relationship with France, while forging a path of independence for Senegal.

Poetry in Paris
Senghor’s move to Paris triggered a great poetic outpouring. His earliest two collections of poems are entitled Chants d’Ombre and Hosties Noires. Studied in comparison they show his growth as he adjusted to life in France. Chants d’Ombre reflects nostalgically on Senghor’s childhood in Senegal and casts France as a cold distant place. Meanwhile, by his Hosties Noires his rapprochement to France is apparent as he begins to struggle with recognizing both the good and bad parts of French society and his place as an African French citizen.

Conclusion
In his poems Senghor explored and wrestled with his two different halves. The halves of Frenchmen and Africain, poet and politician. His poems offer a guide to his most intimate thoughts and musings that were at times lost in his political façade. They also can cast a light on how Senghor viewed himself throughout his life, the lost man, the reconciler, the juggler, the Frenchman, and finally, the boy. In short Senghor’s poetry is the key to better understand the man behind the politics that successfully brought Senegal from colony to independent state.